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The Commonweal

July 27, 1951

Riot Spirit in Chicago

Interracial Housing

DANIEL M. CANTWELL

A Half Crown

A Short Story

MICHAEL McLAVERTY

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Editor: Edward S. Skillin
Contributing Editor: Philip Burnham
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Feature Editor: John Cogley
Assistant Editor: William Pfaff

Associate Editors
John C. Cort, Anne Fremantle, Francis Downing
Cinema: Philip T. Hartung
Theatre: Walter Kerr

Advertising Manager: John Brubaker

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Cicero Riots

FATHER CANTWELL'S article in this issue was written weeks before the recent riots in Cicero, Illinois. ". . . will Chicago get through the summer without a race riot?" Father Cantwell asked. The answer now must be no.

Cicero is an industrial suburb of Chicago—66,000 population, mostly second and third generation Czechs, Italians, Irish, Poles, Lithuanians and Slovakians. As many as 6,000 of them gathered together for several nights running to protest against the presence of a young Negro family in their all-white community. By no stretch of the imagination could the assemblage be called peaceful. The Cicero crowds were violent and destructive.

Harvey E. Clark, Jr., the Negro father, is a college-bred, 26-year-old bus driver. When he and his wife, also college trained, and their two children attempted to move into a $60 a month Cicero apartment last month, Clark charges, they were beaten with night sticks and pistols by more than fifty policemen and told to get out of town if they knew what was good for them. Clark's attempts to move to Cicero meant nothing more sinister than one army veteran's efforts to get his family out of the overcrowded, disease-ridden, crime-ridden Negro ghetto on Chicago's south side. He was trying to get for himself what thousands of other Cicero folk achieved when they themselves rose out of the stinking slums of the city to the decency of their suburb. Mr. Clark is now suing the town of Cicero and its officials for the violent reception he and his family were given. During the riots, it was necessary to call on units of the local national guard and declare martial law in the area around the apartment building—which had been sold to a Negro realty company out of spite by the former owner, disgruntled because she could not raise the rents.

What started off with the hissing and jeers of housewives as the Clarks attempted to move in their furniture quickly grew. Just as Father Cantwell predicted, crowds gathered during the warm summer evenings and soon there was violence. Bricks and stones were thrown, a group of rioters broke into the Clarks' apartment and destroyed their furniture. Attempts were made to burn the apartment building, so the other tenants had to move out. Twenty-odd persons were injured in clashes between police, soldiers and rioters. The building itself is now a shambles. All in all it was a thoroughly disgraceful performance.

This was the kind of clear and present danger to public order inveighed against from press, pulpit and platform as what we can expect if the Communist movement gains a solid foothold in the United States. Here the guilty ones were not overt subversives but solid citizens carried away by their own hysteria, their superstitions and their fears. The most destructive rioters were teenagers, yet the incident was no simple matter of juvenile delinquency. The more stable influences in the community were lined up on the side of disorder.

SOMEWHERE along the line there were tremendous failures to account for the Cicero affair. Here were thousands of Americans, most of them Christians and Catholics, who were faced with a practical test of their belief in the dignity of the human person, the brotherhood of man and all those noble concepts which their religion teaches and which are the keystones of democracy. And they failed. What the Bible, the catechism, the teachings of the Church, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights held to be true, they denied. The religious truths and democratic creed they thought they lived by, they mocked. What they undoubtedly would insist was worth dying for—the idea of human dignity and the equality of men—they were unwilling to live by. They failed, the Christian American people of Cicero, and behind their failure were other failures even more tragic.

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There was the failure of teachers who neglected to make the democratic idea burn with human meaning while generations of school children merely parroted the formulas of democracy. There was the failure of civic leaders whose patriotic eloquence ever relied more on words than on wisdom. There was the failure of that press which treats Negroes as second-class citizens while it never fails to use the identifying tag "Negro" — as the Chicago *Tribune* does — in every criminal account. The press could do much more than it does to dispel the kind of ignorance and superstition responsible for the Cicero incident.

Above all there was the failure of the religious leaders who over the years left the people of Cicero in ignorance when they might have shed light, either because they were bound by the same chains of bigotry or because they woefully confused Christian prudence with Christian timidity. Somewhere along the line the Christian people of Cicero missed one of the key meanings of Christianity. "And who is my neighbor?" Behind the violence were years of religious schools' mocking themselves by keeping doors closed to Negro students; there were all the thousand sermons on interracial justice never preached; the hundreds of editorials in the religious press never written; the years of lip-service to cut and dried formulas that might have throbbed with meaning.

It has been said that an incident like this gives aid and comfort to Stalin. That surely is a point. A former Asian correspondent wrote in a letter to the New York *Times*: "The Cicero incident is equivalent to a billion dollars worth of prestige in the East, and may yet cost us the lives of thousands of American boys." But the important thing is not how the Christian democrats of Cicero look to the outside world, it is how they *are*. And there are hundreds of communities in the United States where the same thing might be repeated tomorrow. That is the frightening thing.

• NEXT WEEK •

"One always wondered lazily what ever happened to Aeneas when he got out of the underworld," Anne Fremantle writes in reviewing a new translation of the *Aeneid* by Rolfe Humphries.

"Sloth or satiety, the end of the school term or graduation intervened, and one never knew. Now one can painlessly, and in one glorious gulp, read through to the end, to find Aeneas a true hero instead of merely the odious pill who slunk from Dido and said it was the gods who put him up to it."

Hard Bargain

GENERAL RIDGWAY has established the fact that the Communists can say "yes" after all. They finally accepted all of his demands as to how the cease-fire talks in Kaesong were to be conducted. Whatever else this may mean, it does prove that it is possible to drive a bargain with the Communists if you are arguing from what Secretary Acheson has called a "situation of strength."

This is a point of no little importance. Only a few weeks ago, some of Mr. Acheson's critics, among them the editors of *Life,* were giving him a good going-over, saying that he was laying the foundation of American foreign policy on the soft and shifting assumption that Communism and capitalism could co-exist peacefully in one world. This, said *Life,* is impossible: Communism must go, and it is foolish to think that we can negotiate with the Communists on any other terms.

Actually what Secretary Acheson has said is that he hopes to be able to force a change in the Soviet system by backing up his negotiations with collective physical and moral strength. He has never said that the West can co-exist peacefully with an ever-aggressive Soviet imperialism. General Ridgway's demands regarding the cease-fire talks were firmly and vigorously backed up by Secretary Acheson. This is a good example of the kind of negotiation he has in mind.

We yield to no one, including *Life,* when it comes to being skeptical about the possibility of negotiating honorably with the Soviets and their satellites. But we are all for giving it every possible try before going out into the black night of atomic war. Secretary Acheson is a diplomat, not a general, and his job is to exhaust every means of preventing war through honorable negotiations.

No one can say that such diplomacy will ultimately prove successful in stopping Russian Communism without a world war. That, however, is the job Secretary Acheson has been given to do, that is the staggering problem he has had to live with and we trust that it is not too much to expect that his considerable achievements will someday be recognized and rewarded.

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Religion and the Schools

THE question of religious education continues in the news. Earlier this month the Supreme Court of New York handed down the decision that the released-time program in practice in many schools was in accordance with both state and federal constitutions. To draw the line against such minimal cooperation between Church and State as the program requires, the court held, would be to abandon the American tradition of lending encouragement and support to the forces of religion. In view of the wording of the constitutions and such established institutions as military chaplains, Church tax exemptions, the custom of opening Congressional sessions with prayer, maintaining chapels at West Point and Annapolis, etc., to outlaw the released-time program on constitutional grounds would be illogical. The legality of the New York program will now probably be brought to the Supreme Court of the United States.

A week or so before this State Supreme Court decision, the New York Court of Appeals upheld the statute requiring "systematic secular education in the 11 basic subjects required by the state law." By far the majority of private and parochial schools provide "systematic secular education" in this sense. The cases before the Court of Appeals involved parents who were sending their children to Jewish religious schools not approved by the State Board of Regents.

The legislature of South Carolina recently passed a law permitting local communities to close their public schools and rent the buildings and equipment to private educational institutions. This decision was hailed by Frank Chodorov, associate editor of the very right-wing periodical, *Human Events*. Mr. Chodorov went much further than any religious leader. "If it is in the interest of freedom that the Church and State be kept apart," he wrote, "it is equally in the interest of freedom that the school be divorced from the state. That is so because it is impossible to immunize education against religious values. . . . A spurious religion, one that threatens our freedom more than any of the Founding Fathers had in mind when they laid down the doctrine of separatism, has invaded our public institutions. For the same reasons that impelled them to bar the Church, the school should now be barred. In the interests of freedom the public school should now be dropped . . . the legislature of South Carolina has inadvertently hit on the way."

While Mr. Chodorov was raising the cry to erect a wall of separation between State and School, the National Educational Association at its annual meeting in San Francisco issued a report reaffirming the usual thing about separation of Church and State and upholding the NEA's traditional objection to federal aid to any but state-owned schools. The principle of forbidding federal aid to parochial schools or students, direct or indirect, was again vigorously supported in the convention report.

Sauce for the Gander

THERE are reports from Spain to the effect that General Franco is thinking of reshuffling and liberalizing his regime a little in the hope that he can encourage the Western powers to send him the economic and military aid he needs. Britain and France give no sign of any favorable response; on the contrary, they say that they will have nothing to do with Franco. However, Admiral Sherman's recent visit to Madrid seems to indicate that the United States, for its part, is making a deal with Franco to obtain air and naval bases in Spain.

When the United States made a somewhat similar agreement with Tito some months ago, there did not seem to be quite as much moral indignation in evidence among the Europeans as there is now regarding the Franco deal.

The point was made here at the time, by those who take a dim view of giving help to Tito, that if it is absolutely necessary and expedient for us to support the Yugoslavs in the present circumstances, then the least we should do is to try to win moral concessions from Tito and a liberalization of his tyranny in return for our guns and dollars.

That, it seems to us, is a sensible and constructive approach. If you must associate with dictators, you cannot allow yourself to be dragged down to their level.

We hope now that the same thing will apply to Franco. If our Chiefs of Staff have decided that they ought to have Spanish bases, we are hardly in a position to argue with them. But these dealings may very easily do serious damage to our alliance with the other countries of Europe. Unless we exert all the pressure we can in behalf of humane and democratic government, our associations with dictators of any kind can have the effect of deadening the moral heart of the whole system of collective security.

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Muddy Missouri

AS THE flood waters recede in the Missouri Valley, we are bound to witness a rising debate on the old question of a flood control project for that now muddy and dispirited region. President Truman proposed some time ago a Missouri Valley Authority, similar to the TVA, with a unified, over-all plan for conserving and controlling the water and soil of this vast and rich valley in the heart of the country. Right now a project called the Pick-Sloan plan is partly completed and partly in effect in the Missouri Valley. This plan divides conservation and reclamation functions among numerous agencies of local and federal governments.

The residents of the Missouri Valley have expressed the usual dissatisfaction with the proposed Valley Authority, calling it New Deal socialism and so forth, despite the fact that the contemplated MVA provides explicitly for local, state administration of the project. They have, in fact, even resisted the half-planning measures of the Pick-Sloan plan as being too federal and too socialistic.

It is really too bad that rivers just keep rollin' along, unmindful of whether they are flowing through the sovereign backyards of Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma or wherever. Old Man River, we've been told, just don' know nuthin'. But it is just possible that as the residents of the Missouri Valley who have been fighting the MVA clean away the mud and wreckage left in the wake of this flood, they may know considerably more themselves about what it takes to harness a river system that has the power to rise up and wash away their sovereign backyards.

Religious Statistics

THE Protestant *Christian Herald* has just released its annual report on church membership in the United States. The *Herald* finds that during 1950 churches of all faiths reported a net gain of 2,950,987, bringing the grand total to 85,705,280. Of the 221 Protestant denominations the 13 largest account for 76 percent of total Protestant membership. The seven largest Protestant churches have a combined membership greater than that of the Catholic Church. Total picture in the United States: 58.5 percent of the population are church members; 33.2 percent of these are Catholics, 8.3 percent belong to other non-Protestant groups, the majority is Protestant; 44.1 percent of Americans are "unchurched." "All in all," says the *Herald,* "it has been a good year."

They Say

IT seems that Billy told Joyce "something" (nobody knows what for sure, but Walter, Leonard, Earl and Ed are all prepared to make a stab) and Joyce, she "blacked out, I guess." It seems that after she "blacked out" she decided to cut her wrists. It seems then that Billy "let himself go," called the cops and they came, beat down the door and rescued Joyce. Then it seems that Billy said "This is a time when a man needs a wife," so Billy telephoned Eleanor and she and the butler came right away. It seems that after they got Joyce to the hospital Milton came to the kid's bedside but it also seems that the first reports that he held her hand were not true.

It seems that Billy pleaded with the cops to avoid publicity because "this might ruin me," but that the cops stuck to the letter of the law and there was publicity galore—big, black headline publicity, the kind that Billy used to thrive on. Moreover it seems that Milton did love Joyce once, God knows, but there probably won't be a third marriage for them because he doesn't love her any more. "How long can a guy carry a torch?" It also seems that Joyce is not in love with Billy but is simply a very ambitious young woman who would rather be a star in her own right than one of the most beautiful (one of the first ten, maybe first five: Earl Wilson) women in the world and that accounts for the slashing.

It seems that all his friends hope this will teach Billy a lesson and that his and Eleanor's marriage will be stronger than ever because of it. Likewise it seems that Joyce's many, many friends along the Stem are prepared to forget the whole incident within a week. It seems that all it amounted to was "one lousy little scratch" (Joyce's manager) and the whole thing could have been hushed up if only Billy hadn't lost control and called the cops.

And it seems that Korean peace negotiations, Eisenhower's efforts in Europe, the defense of the West, the phoney trials in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and just about anything else with which this magazine is normally concerned become second-page material when a story like the Rose-Mathews-Holm-Berle one breaks.

It seems that *this is the way the world ends, this is the way the world ends, this is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper.*

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Riot Spirit in Chicago

Tensions over interracial housing may rise to the surface at any time.

By DANIEL M. CANTWELL

DAYLIGHT saving time and warm summer evenings are almost universally popular in Chicago. But a change in heart for some of us came in about 1947. We began to dread the long summer evenings. Rain and cool evenings were things to pray for. Anything that would keep people off the streets.

Even now, as our industrial civilization manufactures an extra hour and announces that summer is here, many of us are oppressed by an anxiety: will Chicago get through the summer without a race riot? Summer has proved to be the dangerous time. It is easy to get a crowd together to protest, should a Negro family move into a "white" block. You can count on real trouble after the men get home from work and the supper dishes are washed. Windows will be broken; cars will be overturned. The family will be out on the street. Everyone is expected to let the "niggers" know they are not wanted.

Most of the serious racial disturbances in Chicago in recent years have broken out over interracial housing, or over Negroes moving in "where they are not supposed to be." Whether it was the Chicago Housing Authority opening up a public housing project on a non-discriminatory basis in a neighborhood where Negroes had never lived, or whether it was a single Negro family buying or renting a dwelling in an all-white block, there was always danger, sometimes trouble, sometimes violence.

★

ONE warm evening five years ago, the residents of a near west-side neighborhood, mostly Italian and Polish, staged a rally in a community center. They were furious and bitter because Negroes had moved into their neighborhood. The night before windows had been broken, incendiary bombs set off, threats of even worse things to come were made. Babe in the woods, I had agreed to speak to the rioters.

I decided to appeal to the Faith. What would our Holy Father say if he were here? What would Christ say were He to walk into the hall? Whatever else might have appealed to them, these things didn't. The questions came: Why should we have "niggers" in *our* neighborhood? What about our life's savings? Will our girls be safe on the street at night? Would you want your sister . . .?

They didn't intend to put up with Negroes in their neighborhood, they assured me. They would see to it themselves. The meeting broke up. Out into the streets they went.

That was probably the night when I started to wish that somebody would write the story of interracial housing—projects and neighborhoods where interracial living worked. I could think of some examples. I knew there were many more.

In 1946 the Chicago Housing Authority opened a temporary housing project for veterans near the south-side airport. The residents were up in arms when they learned that four or five of the 200 families in the project would be Negro. Fifty white squatters took over the last 59 vacant apartments to keep the Negroes from moving in. Evicted by the police, some of them were on hand when two Negro veterans and their families arrived a few days later. For several days a riotous crowd gathered near the project. At the peak of the trouble five hundred policemen had to be called out for duty.

One afternoon two priests came out to the project. They hoped that a Roman collar might have a quieting effect on the crowd. The reception they got was not strictly liturgical. They were lucky to get out of the neighborhood without having their car overturned.

The people—many of them Catholic—were wild with irrational fear and emotion. How I wished someone would write a book—in English, readable, persuasive—that would prepare small home owners for living in an interracial neighborhood.

★

"FERNWOOD" happened in August 1947. The place, on the outskirts of Chicago, was previously unknown to me. Even now the name means not a place but an event—a night when 1,000 policemen had to be called out to contain a riot in this sedate, well-groomed neighborhood. It had been going on several days. A mile away from the project Negroes were being

REV. DANIEL M. CANTWELL is chaplain of the Catholic Labor Alliance in Chicago.

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taken off buses and street cars and beaten. At least 118 men and boys—many from "good" families—had to be arrested. Many of those arrested came from distances as far as four miles away to do what seemed to be a duty.

The disturbance in this peaceful neighborhood was caused by the fact that seven Negro families had moved into a new public housing project. It looked like a fight to the finish. Very sober citizens feared that we were on the verge of another riot like our 1919 affair, when at least 83 were killed and 539 injured.

One thing saved the day—or the night: the good sense of the Negroes in Chicago who resisted the impulse to organize squads to avenge what was happening. They left that task to the police and the courts.

For those who were arrested the court imposed an educational program. How good it would have been to have had a book that told why and where Negroes and whites must and do live together in peace as good neighbors. Preferably, a book these people could read.

★

MR. and Mrs. Roscoe Johnson moved into 7153 S. St. Lawrence Avenue on July 25, 1949. They had bought a two-flat, the first Negro family to live south of 71st Street. The night of July 25th trouble began. Before it was over every window in the Johnson house was broken, incendiary bombs were thrown in the windows, the street had to be barricaded by the police. The Johnsons lived huddled in the middle of their rooms for days, never daring to go near a window.

During the siege one of the local priests visited the Johnsons to cheer them up and give encouragement. Two burly cops escorted him down the street, making it clear that they had not too much sympathy with these Negroes or their friends, that this was just an assignment. Inside the Johnsons' building, on the first floor, he found a group of university students, proud members of the Young Progressives, eating lunch. They had slept there the night before as a gesture of friendship and protection.

Outside the building were the people who called the priest "father." They would have lynched the Johnsons if they had the chance. While he was there the priest heard someone arrange a police escort so that Mrs. Johnson could go to Mass the following Sunday.

★

PEORIA STREET, even for Chicagoans, had always been simply the first street west of Halsted. But now people around the world who have never heard of Halsted know what happened on Peoria Street in 1949. This wasn't a case of Negroes moving in. This was a case of merely a rumor—a fear perhaps, for these people, their greatest fear. What actually happened was plain enough. Negroes had been invited as guests into the home at 5643 S. Peoria Street. For the Irish-Catholic neighborhood the sight of Negroes was enough. The rumor spread that Negroes had moved in. It was almost a week before people returned to their senses. Meantime, violence, hatred, sin.

The hosts to the Negroes were new residents in the neighborhood. They were Jewish and, as investigation seemed to show, members of a variety of left-wing, if not Communist, organizations. On three counts, then, they became enemies of the neighborhood. The rioting which started out against the Negroes assumed the nature of an anti-Semitic and anti-Communist crusade. Participation in the violence and disorder was excused as justified because it supposedly met the challenge of a "Communist plot."

Everybody knew that the same reaction would have resulted if any other family were to dare to invite Negroes into their house.

★

CHICAGO'S City Council voted favorably—almost four to one—on a petition asking Washington for action on public housing legislation. That was early 1949. But well over 12 months later no sites for the public projects had been selected. No alderman wanted public housing in his ward. For months they wrangled.

The decisive reason was the policy of nondiscrimination. There was some talk of socialism, but no one really meant it. Public housing was all right in the Black Belt, but not on vacant land sites about the city. Hundreds of men and women in the city council chambers raged and hooted against all public housing. What they really opposed was the danger of Negroes moving into their neighborhood.

So strong was the opposition that despite the greatest housing shortage of any large city in the country the city fathers decided on a compromise in which most of the new projects would be on slum land, displacing almost as many, if not more, people than they would ultimately house. Our city fathers need education. In principles, to be sure. But also in facts—readably, humanly presented—to convince them that interracial housing can and does work and that anything else will not work.

The Illinois state legislature is even now engaged in a fight that could mean the death of public housing in this state. Already the state senate has passed a bill requiring a public referendum on any public housing project before it can be built or enlarged. The proponents will admit that their aim is to kill public housing. The rea-

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son is deftly expressed: the Chicago Housing Authority has been trying to change the political and social character of Chicago. This plainly means that the CHA has been guilty of moving some Negroes out of the Black Belt.

In Illinois, as elsewhere across the nation, the National Association of Real Estate Boards is behind the campaign for government by referendum. The interesting fact is that they are able and willing to capitalize on irrationality. They appeal — as it suits the locality — to economic selfishness, or to political hysteria, or to racial prejudice, or to all three of them. Illinois—downstate and upstate—is vulnerable on the racial issue.

The outcome of this particular bill is still uncertain. The general assembly has not yet acted. I wish I knew a book to send my representative at Springfield that would help him to see the light about the American community of the future.

★

A STUDY made by Morton Deutsch and Mary Evans Collins called *Interracial Housing* has just been published by the University of Minnesota Press ($3). The Field Foundation assisted the publication, and Marshall Field declares in the foreword that he "believes research can do much to hasten the process of outmoding prejudice."

The authors have proceeded carefully to make a study of four public housing projects—two in Newark, two in New York City. All of them house Negro and white families. In two of them Negroes and whites are segregated within the project. In the other two there is no discrimination—they are interracial, as the word goes.

The authors proceed to investigate the influence of the two patterns on the racial attitudes of the residents. An enormous amount of work was done in interviewing, in drawing up questions, in comparing notes. From the outset the authors suspected that if given the chance, or if compelled by circumstances to live together in a social atmosphere that recognized equality, people will normally come off knowing each other better. They will be less apt to indulge in prejudicial judgments against individuals or groups of people. Exceptions must be expected, of course.

Their research confirms their suspicions, both by giving evidence of the favorable change, and evidence of the exceptions. Whether their suspicions are any more "certain" for themselves now than before is doubtful. Whether the "proved" suspicion alone is now any better guide for action or for policy is highly improbable. Whether this long research was worthwhile in the light of what was ultimately published is in the opinion of this writer questionable. A common sense judgment is verified in an elaborate manner and expressed in obscure verbiage. Is it worth it?

Neither the language nor the style nor the scientific apparatus of the book makes it available for any of the people on Peoria Street, on the Johnson's block, in the City Council, in the Illinois legislature. Maybe it wasn't written for them. Good enough. For whom, then?

Is it expected that merely on the basis of the evidence here housing administrators will determine on an interracial pattern for their projects? Not rationally, surely. For what is "proved" here is that under proper circumstances an interracial pattern will work out without the majority of the tenants objecting. The book does not determine when the circumstances are propitious. It does not determine either when the majority of people in the surrounding community will object, and strongly enough to kill all public housing.

The book lays emphasis on the fact that the change of attitude in the tenants studied was brought about by the fact they were situated in an interracial project. It emphasizes that religion had nothing to do with it. It emphasizes the point so much that one wonders what the authors want their readers to deduce. Some will be willing to deduce that religion is useless for changing bad racial attitudes or for creating solid attitudes in the first place. They will deduce it despite the fact that there are tons of evidence to the contrary, though in the nature of this book you would not expect to find that evidence here.

★

THOUGH this first important study of interracial housing was made from the experiences in public housing projects, it is to be hoped that the book will not confirm the already prevalent enough idea that the main purpose of public housing is to break segregation. Public housing should not be made to carry the full burden of the task of eliminating segregation.

If by our speech we assign it that burden, public housing may itself be eliminated. As a matter of fact it is not doing it. Actually even here in Chicago at the present time there are numerically more people involved in interracial communities outside public projects than inside.

In the last three years in Chicago 20,000 Negroes have moved outside the established Negro community into a hitherto white community. With the exception of a few cases — some chronicled here—they have been free from violence against their persons and their property.

This is an enormous change. What has happened in human situations, as barriers have broken down, and attitudes have changed, would be worth knowing. It would be good to have a book. The sociologist who writes it ought to have a course in journalism and plain speech.

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SO THEY TELL ME

Substitute for Debate

BEGINNING, I suppose, in the garden of Eden, life established itself in patterns of conflict. Protagonists beget antagonists; and sensible men regard tension as a description of normal and democratic society. Law is necessary not to prevent tension, but to refine it, to define and fix the ways in which it shall be expressed.

One of the prior conditions for the civilized expression of tension is freedom of speech. It is obviously a substitution for slaughter. Freedom of speech presupposes civilized men, and ought to presuppose truthful men. An ideal society would be one in which men restrained and suppressed the tendency, and even the desire, to tell lies. The law of libel proves that they do not. The lie is the sophisticated substitute for a slap in the face. Even children now regard the word propaganda not a means of carrying on debate, but a way of murdering truth.

The opponents and critics of the Wagner Act maintained that it gave to unions an advantage, withheld from the employer, in making known their views and claims. In consequence the Taft-Hartley Law claimed to right this alleged wrong. Under its provisions, the employer is free to express any "views, argument or opinion" to his employees, so long as "such expression contains no threat of reprisal or force or promise of benefit." The National Labor Relations Board has tended to interpret this phrase liberally, that is to say, in favor of the employer. For example, the Superintendent of the American Thread Company, in Tallapoosa, Georgia, was successfully allowed to address the workers, at a meeting, in the following language:

> We have a nice little mill here, but someone or something is fixing to come in and tear up your playhouse. This outside influence is just a bunch of pot-bellied Yankees with big cigars in their mouths, and the dues they collect will just go up North, and you should want to keep your money in Tallapoosa. If they come in, you will share the same rest rooms with Negroes and work side by side with them. It comes right out of Russia and is pure Communism and nothing else. (Senate Subcommittee Report on Labor-Management Relations.)

Since both the lies in that speech, and the calculated maintenance of racial prejudice, need no comment from me, I want to say, in passing, that Senator McCarthy is the cultural end-product of American Big Business. This tactic of loosely charging your opposition with Communism has been a successful device of our management since, at least, 1874 in the period of the famous New York riots of the unemployed in Tompkins Square. Even the New York press used, during the railway strikes of 1879, such language as "Chicago in the Possession of Communists." Ever since the successful defeat of the steel strikers, in 1919, the verbal resort to "Bolshevism" and "Communism" as being the controlling forces in union activity has been the ceaseless and instinctual response of corporate employers.

★

I HAVE just finished reading photostatic copies of literature distributed to all of its workers by the Grand Central Airport Company of Tuscon, Arizona. The company, it ought to be remembered, is working on government contracts.

In the summer of 1950 the UAW-CIO began an attempt to organize these workers. On April 20, 1951 an election was held. The vote was 1,198 against the union, and 461 for it. It is the contention of the union that the defeat is ascribable to unfair labor practices on the part of the company. What specifically is attacked is the character and content of the management literature used during the campaign.

Among other things, the company circulated and distributed a pamphlet written for the Constitutional Educational League by one Joseph P. Kamp. Kamp has recently been punished for contempt of Congress. The pamphlet, used by management, is called "Vote CIO and Get A Soviet America."

Having done its duty to a fascistic writer, the company then reprinted and circulated an editorial from the Chicago *Tribune* of August 6, 1944. I quote from that editorial:

> The people who support the New Deal ticket this November are supporting the Communists and building up the day when they plan the Red terror sweeping down upon America. A New Deal vote is an invitation to murder.

The company circulated and distributed a reprint of an editorial in the Los Angeles *Examiner* of December 5, 1950. I quote from that editorial:

> First and foremost, therefore, this country should withdraw its armed forces from the invasion area. We should get the troops out of Korea as quickly as possible. Secondly, we should get out of the United Nations. Accordingly, the United Nations should let Red China in and leave the United States out. Finally, we should end our unrequited efforts to support and supply an ingrate Europe.

I point out that this company is a defense industry, working on government contracts. I do not need to point out the condition in which Europe would be without American support, nor the Communist vote in the recent

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French and Italian elections, without American support. Nor do I need to point out the immense difference there would be if the American labor movement did not exist, or did not so strongly support anti-Communism in Europe. Nor do I need to say that the International Confederation of Free Unions has just met in Milan, that our labor movement participated in that meeting, one of whose chief concerns was the taking of control of the French and Italian unions from the Communists.

★

A COMPANY, even if it is operating by government contract, has a right to oppose the foreign policy of that government, on whose funds it is profitably existing. Even granting the pernicious relevance of the two editorials to a union organizational campaign, it is difficult to conclude that the Grand Central Airport Company is familiar with good sense, honesty or good taste.

While claiming to fight Communism at home and save Tuscon from union terror, the company sent to the homes of all its workers reprints from two Communist newspapers. Of course the company did not identify the *Labor Herald* and the *Daily People's World* as Communist publications, a lie in itself, but it did accept and endorse the Communists' script. For example, one of the reprints came from a piece of writing by George Morris, who functions as the labor correspondent for the *Daily Worker*. The piece was entitled "Negro Supporter Raps Reuther at UAW Parley for Bias Policy."

It is, of course, a simple lie told by George Morris, and by all Communists, that Walter Reuther is guilty of race prejudice. The whole character of his union and of the man himself testifies against this. If the Grand Central Airport Management does not know that, they are incompetent. If they do know that, they have lied, and have consciously used Communist literature to aid and abet the spreading of that lie. The other piece of Communist literature used by the company was entitled "Other Unions Know and Don't Trust the CIO—Can You Trust Them?" The other unions which presumably know are, of course, the Communist unions which have been ejected from the CIO. It is quite a trick you perform when you use Communist literature to aid in a war upon a union which you are charging with Communism. It is, of course, an exercise in free speech; but it is surely a sinister use of that right and privilege. Our Big Business people have been trying for some time now to identify capitalism with democracy and with religion. It is understandable if there are those who doubt it. From the Grand Central Airport Company decent men must withhold respect.

Part of the reason for such withholding is contained in one of the company's own pieces of propaganda: "There is one thing that Communists and unions have in common. They both tell lies." The character and conduct of the human mind is constantly exciting and bewildering. In the worst of us, the good and the true continue to plague. No one, for instance, more than the habitual liar, is more seemingly devoted to truth. His constant refuge when under attack is that it is his opponent who lies: thus the company in this instance conforms to the psychotic practice.

Like a wide-swinging sledge, the charge of Communism against the UAW — one of the most strikingly anti-Communist unions in the world, and so openly recognized by the Communist Party—was persistently used in this campaign. One of the less direct is the following heavy-handed attempt at subtlety and evasion of libel:

> In the Fourth Report of the Senate Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California (1948) entitled 'Communist Front Organizations' on Page 212, under the heading, 'Communist Dominated CIO Unions' it says: 'This Committee has found the following CIO unions to be so thoroughly entrenched with Communist leadership as to be dominated by the Stalinites in America.' It then lists 19 unions and closes by saying, 'This does not purport to be a complete list.'

Added to the clearly indefensible warning that "'A NO VOTE is a guarantee against strike terror,'" is the almost expected management tender regard for worker freedom, home and country:

> Our own labor bosses spend millions for socialized medicine, which means the enslavement of your family doctor and dentist. Isn't this Communism? They spend millions to put over rent controls which means the confiscation of property. Isn't this Communism? They use slave labor every day in this country. Isn't this Communism?

When you add to all this the fact that supervisors in the plant talked to the workers about the coming election, about how the workers intended to vote, made promises of advancement if they would oppose unionism, you have an example of the extraordinary power which management has over the decisions formed by its workers. This kind of management practice participates in the characteristic feature of our advertising: the subtle or unsubtle use of fear as an incentive of human conduct.

Threat is implicit, and power held and withheld, in the habit pattern of giving small wage increases during, and under pressure of, the union campaign. It is the holding of the carrot in front of the beast. It is fearful, this calculated exploitation of the basic needs of men. It is odd that those who resort to it should send material into workers' homes which speaks of enslavement.

I do not know what the NLRB is going to do about all this, or how gratified Taft and Hartley are by their law. I do know that the abiding test of fitness for power is the ability not to misuse it. I do know that any right we possess is a constant challenge to our sense of restraint; that the continuance of a democratic society is not unrelated to the moral quality of the speech and conduct of men, whose not always merited prerogative is to manage it.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

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The Screen

YES AND NO, MY DARLING DAUGHTER

IF HOLLYWOOD really wanted to do a movie exposing the weaknesses and failings of fraternity and sorority life I'm sure it could. The industry has sunk its teeth into other controversial subjects and has come up with some lively criticisms and answers. And I'm sure that when Producer Julian Blaustein started making *"Take Care of My Little Girl,"* based on Peggy Goodin's novel, he intended to shoot the works and let some realistic light shine through on the whole sorority system. But somewhere along the line, things got out of hand. No doubt influential fraternity and sorority members objected; perhaps the temptation to visualize a typical musical-comedy campus was too strong; or perhaps in view of today's tepid boxoffices, the makers of this movie just tried too hard to please too many people. As a result, the much touted anti-sorority movie won't exactly please anyone—except those people who belligerently think all sororities should be damned.

The script of "Take Care of My Little Girl," written by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein, assumes that there is nothing to be said in favor of sororities at all. It portrays Tri U, the one sorority examined closely by the film, as a nest of undemocratic snobs. Its members, except for a few original thinkers, are pretty, well-dressed girls who approve of cheating to gain their own ends and who are on the whole smothered in false standards, which they inherited from mother and sorority sisters of past generations. When the movie's central character, played by Jeanne Crain, gets to Midwestern University (which is much more giddy and social than any college I ever saw in the Midwest or anywhere else) she is all aflutter: her mother has written to Tri U, her own sorority, to "take care of my little girl," and Jeanne knows she will be taken care of. She is—but things don't quite work out as she expected. In a whirl of girlish excitement, she is rushed; and in due time she is pledged. But her best friend, disappointed at not making Tri U and deserted by Jeanne, leaves school heartbroken. Then Jeanne begins to see what her sisters-to-be are like and how she is to be made over in their mold. The pleasant senior (Dale Robertson), a 28-year-old war veteran who is a "barb" because he will have no truck with all this fraternity nonsense, is more or less dropped in spite of Jeanne's admiration for him, while a wealthy campus playboy, who belongs to one of the best fraternities, is accepted by Jeanne in spite of his unsavory reputation. In fact this cad persuades Jeanne to help him cheat in a French exam, a feat she pulls so proficiently that she seems to be considered the cleverest girl on the campus and will no doubt be elected Frosh Queen. As the picture goes on and on, there are plenty of examples of the low standards and undemocratic methods used by these unwholesome sorority girls; but the script doesn't suggest that Jeanne's standards couldn't have been too high in the first place or she never would have been sucked in so easily on that cheating deal.

The most blatant examples of sorority girls' nasty snobbery come in two scenes showing the assembled sisters voting on new pledges and later when the girls decide one of these newcomers isn't good enough for them. Director Jean Negulesco gives these episodes the full treatment in female cattiness; and occasionally throughout the film he handles his little snobs with appropriate satire. But what the picture as a whole needs is some balance, something to be shown in favor of a fraternity system that has survived through the years in spite of its undemocratic principles. In a way, "Take Care of My Little Girl" passes the buck: the girls' mistakes stem back to mom and the system she handed down to succeeding generations. If this is what the movie is trying to say, in its somewhat shallow way, then it should be applauded for ending on a hopeful note. Jeanne decides sororities are not for her. After she turns in her pledge pin, her "barbarian" friend consoles her and tells her she has come a long way. And when she worries about her mother's reaction, he assures her that mothers have to grow up too.

★

MOM seems to be in for a beating in Hollywood these days. The villain, if any, in *"Hard, Fast and Beautiful"* is played by Claire Trevor, who gives one of those frightening performances that made Bette Davis so popular. As the mother of an up-and-coming tennis champion, Claire pushes her hard-working daughter until the girl almost gets lost in a morass of success. Sally Forrest is extremely attractive as the young tennis champ; but once she gets wise to mama's self-centered scheming she becomes almost as ruthless as this older and more predatory female. Since this story is pretty much on the soap-opera side, it has to have a happy ending, and this comes about when Sally sees what's going on and gets smart enough to give mom the gate.

★

IF, however, you'd like to go to the movies and just relax without having to think too hard about anything, you'll find that *"Excuse My Dust"* fits well the classification known as summer entertainment. I approached it somewhat dubiously because I find Red Skelton rather wearing and usually his brand of humor leaves me longing for Crosby, Jerry Lewis or Dan Dailey. But this time there is an appropriate softness to Mr. Skelton's carrying-on; and as the inventor of a horseless carriage in 1895, he held my interest throughout this gay musical film. Of course it must be admitted that this little comedy about the early days of gasmobiles has many assets other than Red's restrained performance as a shy, bumbling genius. The cast also includes Sally Forrest (exhibiting a much sweeter disposition than she gives out with as a put-upon tennis champ) and MacDonald Carey as a wealthy competitor for Sally's pretty little hand.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Of Note

Catholic Novelists

THE most recent issue of *The Dublin Review* (28 Ashley Place, London, S.W. 1, England) carries a review of Robert J. North's book *Le Catholicisme dans l'ouevre de François Mauriac,* written by Gerald Vann, O.P. The following are pertinent excerpts:

In the *New Yorker* of 14 April, 1951, there was a picture of a sinister old grandmother telling a bedtime story to a little girl, and the caption gave the end of the story: "Then the dragon gobbled up the handsome young prince and his lovely bride and lived happily ever after." There is no denying that we live in a macabre and lugubrious world; and it is not surprising if novelists, who make that world their setting, are macabre and lugubrious in their turn. But for the Catholic novelist this immediately poses a problem: a particularization of the age-old problem of the relation between art and prudence. Latterly it has been discussed at length, with special reference to M. François Mauriac, by M. Robert J. North, and by M. Gaëtan Bernoville who contributes a long introduction to his book.

The latter quotes a passage from M. Julien Green which states the problem in its extreme form: "The true novelist does not dominate his novel, he becomes it, he is immersed in it. Between him and his characters there exists a deeper complicity even than he imagines: and if they sin, he in a way sins too. . . . This being the case—and to my mind there is no shadow of doubt of it—I would ask whether the fact of writing a novel is compatible with the state of grace. . . . One cannot write when one lives in perpetual fear of sinning by the very fact of writing."

This might well, at first sight, seem an unnecessarily gloomy view; but it is not a new one, and it has vexed Mauriac, in particular, for many years. It was discussed by Maritain in the 1927 edition of *Art et Scholastique;* and by Mauriac, dissatisfied with Maritain's solution, in *God and Mammon.* In Maritain's view, the problem is usually wrongly stated:

"The essential problem is not to know whether a novelist may or may not depict this or that aspect of evil, but to know at what altitude he is when making his picture, and whether his art and his soul are pure enough and strong enough to make it without connivance." . . .

It is surely not true to argue with Mauriac that "if a novelist keeps the superhuman virtues that Maritain would have him keep, he could never write about evil people": the effect of the writer's personality, his state of soul, his unconscious, is surely more subtle than that. . . .

But the problem remains. If you are neither saint, nor, at the other extreme, deliberately setting out to do evil, but just an ordinary human being, what are you to do?

Shrewdly enough Mauriac remarks in *God and Mammon*: "People of my calibre complicate the 'drama of the Catholic novelist.' The humblest priest would tell me, like Maritain: "Be pure, become pure, and your work too will have a reflection in heaven. Begin by purifying the source and those who drink of the water cannot be sick." As far as the novelists' own personal life is concerned, the theologian would surely agree with M. Bernoville: "*C'est une loi chrétienne que de bien faire son métier*: fulfil the vocation God has given you and write as well as you can, and as truthfully as you can; try to be a saint so as to do it perfectly; but in the meantime, remember the principle of double effect: concern yourself with the job in hand, as a job, and if it in fact lands you, incidentally, in difficulties, cope with them as best you can on the spot, and don't worry.

But what of the other problem: the harm that may be done to the reader? Here again a certain robust good sense is needed. Ethics is not an exact science: if every artist waited for an absolute guarantee that his work would have ill effects on nobody, nothing would ever be done. Nor must he exaggerate his own share of responsibility. Here Mauriac himself puts the matter succintly: "An author is neither moral nor immoral in himself. It is our own attitude of mind that decides what his influence on us is to be."

If the first sentence is not perhaps quite accurate, the second one holds the core of the matter. Incitement to sin is, like modesty, a relative term. And a reader who is of age to be responsible must choose for himself what he shall read; with the young, the responsibility rests with parents, guardians, educators. (Is it not indeed one of the main tasks of education to prepare the mind, the personality, to be able to judge for itself, to be discriminating and critical ,to be able to cope with adventitious impressions?) And if, as is no doubt true, even the most prudent reader may come across something which is harmful for him, still you can only take things by and large: ethics is not an exact science: though there are accidental evil effects by the way they do not outweigh the good to mankind as a whole, the good done by the creation of art, which gives to man that *douloureuse finesse dont on ne voudrait pas ne pas souffrir* which we call culture and which makes the soul worth saving. . . .

And so we return to Maritain, and the 'purifying of the source' and the question of the 'altitude' at which the novelist does his writing. The purifying is in part a moral question; the altitude is in part a question of holiness or sinfulness; but only in part. No doubt it is particularly so where sins of the

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flesh are in question; but these are only one of many possible exemplifications of the problem, and by no means the most serious—and it is significant for the understanding of Mauriac himself and his theological point of view that for him they loom so large. But elsewhere it may well be equally—and always it is to some extent—a question of an *intellectual* purification: of achieving a deeper understanding of the fullness of the Catholic faith. M. Bernoville rightly feels that Mauriac's tendencies to Jansenism, fatalism, an obsession with sin, and so forth, are evinced more by what is absent from his work than by what is present (p. xv); and both he and M. North are right again in maintaining that these tendencies are a question of temperament rather than of doctrinal error; but a lacuna which is due to a question of temperament is still remediable and intellectually remediable. We have no right to grumble at Mauriac because his characters are sombre; we have a right to grumble if the backcloth also is unrelieved gloom, for Christ is risen. To realize that in spite of all the evil and ugliness there is still sanity and happiness and love and gaiety to be found in the world: this is something which sanctity can achieve; of course; but it can be achieved by other means—by a little ordinary common-sense thinking. There are times when one is sorely tempted to feel that Catholic literature in France today tends to take itself altogether too solemnly. . . .

But that is not to say that the problem is not a serious and profound one. Only, we should keep a sense of proportion. Because the novelist must write *ex alto,* and must therefore purify the sources of his writing, we are not to conclude that he may not write at all until he becomes a saint.

A theologian does not need to be a good man in order to write good theology; he only needs a good mind, though admittedly his books will have an immeasurably deeper and better effect on his readers if he is holy than if he is a sinner—not because his theological argument will be any *truer,* necessarily, than it would be otherwise, though of course it will be more profound and luminous, but because of the personal overtones, the *caritas,* which the language will convey to the heart. The novelist is in more difficult case because his approach is essentially more personal, imaginative, evocative; but here again his first concern is truth, and truth can, after all, be rationally apprehended and measured. If the love of God, and man, and beauty, all lie behind and motivate his making; and if in the making he tries to paint the truth, and to *bien faire son métier,* he has surely done all that can be asked of him; and must surely benefit mankind, whatever his personal weaknesses. Mauriac's vision of reality may be incomplete or lopsided; but his power, his depth of psychological insight, his penetration into the secret recesses of the heart of evil, the beauty of his writing, have enriched us, and made mankind his debtor.

A SHORT STORY

A Half Crown

By MICHAEL McLAVERTY

BEFORE dusk nine or ten overexcited boys were going round the houses in the street begging stuff for their annual Fifteenth-of-August bonfire. Anything at all would do they boldly announced to their neighbors: old boxes, oilcloth, newspapers, broken chairs, and thrown-out mattresses—and they would point to the middle of the street where a miscellaneous heap of these articles was stacked as high as the arms of the lamp-post. In two hours time when the blue darkness of summer would slowly descend upon the street they would blacken or paint their faces, wear bowler hats and old garments, and sprinkling the heap with paraffin they would accompany the first bursts of flame by yelling a hymn in honor of the Blessed Virgin; then they would dance round the ring of flame, shouting and laughing, letting off fireworks, while their mothers and fathers gathered in an outer circle would encourage their wild Indian antics.

Now as they pressed eagerly round the doors they cheered when anything was handed out to them, and as they carried these objects shoulder-high or dragged them to the spreading pile they would cheer again and dash off once more, promising themselves that this would be the greatest bonfire that was ever seen in their district. Presently they reached the end-house of the street where an old woman lived alone; here they halted in a compact group, whispering and debating among themselves whether to rap the door or turn back. They feared this woman, for she was always muttering mysteriously to herself and seldom opened her door except to threaten them with the police or with a stick whenever they came to play handball against the gable of her house. But tonight their tense feelings had numbed their fear of her, and the biggest boy among them struck his chest stoutly and volunteered to knock the door even if no one else would venture with him. He stepped out from the group and rapped the door with flourishing importance. There was no answer to his knock though a few of the smaller boys standing safely out from the door began to whisper: "She's staring out at us . . . she's upstairs . . . I seen the curtains moving . . . she's in . . . I seen her with my own two eyes."

The door was rapped again, and this time the biggest boy, hearing the shuffle of feet in the hallway, edged away from the door. The door was slowly opened, and before they could see her they chorused out: "Could you please give us something for the bonfire?" She smiled at

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MICHAEL McLAVERTY is the author of a number of short stories and the novels, Call My Brother Back, Lost Fields, and In This Thy Day.

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them and the smile drew their confidence and they all crowded closer, each pleading with her to give them something.

"All right," she said, "go round to the back door and I'll give you something."

They moved round dubiously. "Maybe it's a bucket of water she'll throw round us!" the biggest said; and they all laughed—a laugh that was strange and low-pitched.

They heard the stiff bolt in the back door scringing as she levered it back.

"There—would that be of any use for your bonfire?" she said, pointing to a black sofa that was mottled with mildew and propped up with bricks to support a missing leg. They buzzed round it where it lay under a sideless shelter, and in a few minutes had it hauled through the door and out to the gable-end where they turned it over and examined it. Two coils of spring were bursting through the rust-stained sacking and a boy ripped them out, tied them to his feet with string and began to walk round shouting: "The latest in stilts, boys! A walking jack-in-the-box!"

"Aw, give us a pair," the young ones whined as the stuffing and springs were torn out of the sofa by the bigger boys. It was then that a half crown jingled on the ground and one boy pounced on it.

"Finder is keeper!" he said and tried to put it in his pocket.

"No, you won't!"

"It's mine. I found it. I saw it first."

"It's the oul' woman's," they shouted, balked into honesty.

"Come on and we'll give it back to her," the leader said.

"That's right! That's fair! Give it back to her!" they all chanted except the one who held the coin in his fist.

"All right," he agreed dolefully, and they threw their caps in the air and went back with him to the old woman. They told her they found a half crown in the lining of the sofa.

"Are you sure it's not your own?" she said.

"Naw, where'd we get a half crown?"

She took the silver coin in her hand, turned it over, and stared at a small hole near the rim. She went out with them to the old sofa and they pointed to the exact place where the coin had fallen. For a moment she stood without speaking and the boy who had the springs tied to his feet, disengaged them shyly, fearful that he had done something that had annoyed her.

"Keep the half crown and buy sweets for yourselves," she said quietly. They gave a cheer of delight, hoisted the sofa on to their shoulders like a coffin and marched off singing *The Boys of Wexford*.

★

AS SHE stared after them a long sigh broke from her. She was trembling and she went into the house and sat near the fire in the kitchen. She gripped the arms of the rocking chair to steady herself, and over and over again she said aloud: "Calm yourself! Calm yourself!" for her mind was leaping back to a night, fifteen years ago, when her only son went out that door, never to come back. Where he went to she didn't know, and whether he was alive or dead she might never know. She had grown tired watching for the postman, and though letters came regularly from her two married daughters the letter she prayed for, never came.

Her tears flowed freely—tears of remorse and of baffled pity. One thing she now knew; yes, she knew it now—her son had not lied to her when he swore he didn't steal his sister's half crown. It was good to know that, though her home was broken on account of it and she was alone and had nobody to tell it to.

She shrugged her shoulders and poked up the fire. She could believe him now: believe him with all her heart and without forcing herself to believe. And if only he'd step into the kitchen this very moment, she'd go down on her knees and ask his forgiveness.

She sighed, put a hand to her forehead, and spoke aloud to herself: "Ah, son, wherever you are this day, be you alive or dead, I believe you. You didn't steal the half crown. It was lying hid in the old sofa all these years. That's where it was—in the old sofa!" She swayed to and fro, and the rocking chair creaked under her weight.

God in Heaven, she never could forget that night he quarrelled with her and left the house. More than anything else she thought about it. And not a morning passed and not an evening passed but she prayed with all her might that he'd come back.

But why hadn't she believed him when he swore he didn't touch the half crown? Oh, maybe she'd have done it if only her daughters hadn't screeched and cried out against him. And the language they used that night—it was scandalous! Language they picked up in the factory and the mills—they didn't hear it from her: at least she could say that for herself.

"But wait a minute, wait a minute," she said aloud to her own memory, "wait a minute till I get it all clear again."

★

IT was in the evening it all happened. And the first in from work that evening was Mary and Anne. And what did they do first: they tidied themselves at the jar-tub in the scullery while I got their tea ready. They were in good form the pair of them. They were singing and they were laughing, and each was urging the other to hurry for they were going to see a picture in the First House of *The Clonard*.

"And where are you getting the money from?" I asked them.

"We have it ourselves. We've a half crown. There it is and there's a hole in it for luck."

It was Mary who took the half crown from her apron pocket: the black shiny apron she used at work—and she laid the half crown on the mantelpiece beside the clock. It was beside the clock she left it, for I remember when they discovered it was gone they lifted up the clock and shook it, and they lifted up the two brass candlesticks

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and the tea canister. But it wasn't there; it wasn't anywhere about the kitchen.

But wait now, wait now, I'm going too quick. What happened after they left the half crown on the mantlepiece? Let me see: I made them their tea and I poured it out for them and sat on the sofa watching them. I didn't lift the half crown; I didn't touch it; I didn't look at it to see the little hole that was in it for luck. I am sure of that! I knew it was there on the mantelpiece for I heard it click the time Mary planted it down beside the clock. And as I sat on the sofa I heard Jimmy's rat-tat at the door. He came in and he too was in the best of form. I remember he was in no hurry out. He was a good boy, Jimmy; he loved a book and he wasn't using the house as a lodginghouse like them two straps of girls. They were always on the go—two runners if ever there were ones: two clips of daughters that didn't give a straw whether I was left alone one night or two nights or every night. No, they didn't give a rap about me, but poor Jimmy did.

But I'm wandering again. Where was I? I was where Jimmy came in. He took off his oily linens and I poured hot water into a basin in the scullery for him to wash himself with. Nothing could take the oily grease off him like hot water and washing soda. The oily smell off his clothes was like the oil I used in the sewing machine that made me sick. I remember he was singing. He used to sing one thing and another that he picked up at his work. But he always sang: *My feet are here on Broadway this blessed harvest morn*—he knew I liked that, for he knew that I was reared in a country parish that seen many a decent girl and boy set off for America.

My mind's wandering on me again. Where was I? Yes, Jimmy washed himself in the scullery and I boiled a fresh egg for his tea. He didn't want any hot water for shaving for he said he wasn't going out. Merciful God, he wasn't going out! He said he was in no hurry for his tea and he'd wait till Mary and Anne had finished theirs. He lay on the sofa—his shirt was open at the neck and his face was red and fresh after the good washing he gave himself. I handed him his slippers that I had warming at the side of the hob and I lifted his working shoes to give them a brush or two for the morning. And then when the girls had finished their tea I cleared away the soiled dishes and asked Jimmy to sit over to the table. The girls were brushing their hair at the looking glass on the wall.

"Where are you set for, the night? You're in a hell of a hurry," Jimmy said.

"The pictures."

"Who's taking you?"

"We're taking ourselves."

"You must have plenty of spondulics when you can go every night in the week to the pictures."

"It's our own money. We never see much of yours. You'd never ask us to the pictures—not if we got in for nothing."

"I'd like my job taking you two anywhere."

I DISREMEMBER rightly what happened after that but I think Mary sat on the sofa and Anne went upstairs for her good coat from the back of the door and I went out to the yard for a shovel of coal. That coal was always damp and I mind the way it hissed on the fire and Jimmy saying he must put sides on that shelter in the yard. It was then that I seen Mary standing on the fender and looking on the mantelpiece and asking if I saw her half crown.

"It's there beside the clock where you left it," I said.

"It's not."

She stood on a chair and lifted up the clock and looked under it and behind it.

"Did you take it, Mother?"

"I didn't lay a finger on it."

Anne came into the kitchen with her good coat on, ready for the road. I don't know what happened next for my mind is all in a tangle. But I remember the both of them talking at once and asking Jimmy to fork up the half crown and not be codding anymore and keeping them late. Jimmy laughed and I thought by the way he laughed he was fooling them and hiding the money on them. They eyed the time by the clock and then they shouted at him to stop the bloody nonsense and give them the half crown and not keep them late.

"I didn't touch it I tell you," he said.

"You're a liar!" they shouted back at him, and I told them to hush and not let the next-door neighbor hear them fighting.

"You're a liar!" Mary shouted again, for she had a she-divil's temper when you roused her. She tapped her foot on the floor and glared at him.

"You put your collar stud on the mantelpiece when you were going to wash," she said. "The stud's there for all to see but the half crown's not!"

Jimmy put down his cup and smiled at her.

"Give it to them, son, if you have it, and don't keep them late," I said.

"Didn't I tell you I never seen it!"

"You're a thief!" Mary screeched, "That's what you are—a thief!"

Jimmy jumped up from the table and struck her, for I remember Mary crying and expressions flying from her mouth that'd have shamed any decent-minded girl. Oh, them factories and warerooms is no place, let me tell you, to rear your children in: they hear every filth and it sticks in their minds like grease in an old pot. But I'm rambling again. I done my best to quieten them and I told Jimmy he had done wrong to hit her.

"I'll do it again if she calls me a thief!"

"You're a coward," Anne said, "only a coward would strike a girl."

Jimmy sat down again and I knew by the way his cup rattled on the saucer that he was sorry for what he had done. I looked under the square of linoleum near the fender for the half crown, and I looked under the sofa, and I took the tongs and searched in the ashes in the grate but I couldn't find it.

"It's no use looking for it," Anne said, "That playboy has it well hid. Make him give it up to us."

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"Jimmy, son," I said, "give them the half crown. It didn't fly off the mantelpiece by itself."

He stared at me and I'll remember that look to my dying day.

"So you don't believe me either . . . as sure as there's a God above me I didn't take it."

"You needn't bring God into it," I said, for I was annoyed at hearing him swear like that.

"He'd damn his soul over the head of it," Mary shouted.

I don't know what made me do it, but I remember asking Jimmy to turn out his pockets. Ah, God forgive me for asking him to do the like of that! Sure I should have known he hadn't it after he swore he hadn't.

He got up from that side of the table near the looking glass and he pushed in his chair slowly—I'll never forget that! He went upstairs to his room and after five or six minutes of rummaging and rumbling he came down the stairs and banged the front door on his way out.

"Under God where is he away to?" I said.

"He's away to spend it," Mary jeered.

I went upstairs to his room and I saw nothing behind the back of the door only a bare clothes hanger, and on my way downstairs I noticed his heavy overcoat was gone from the rack in the hall.

"He's left us," I said.

"He'd be good riddance if he did," Mary said.

"He'll come back," I said, "Jimmy's not the kind of boy that'd run away from home."

Little did I know then, and it fifteen years ago, that he wouldn't come back. Yes, indeed, fifteen long and lonesome years.

★

SHE rocked herself gently on the chair and began to cry. Then she dried her eyes in her apron and looked slowly round the cheerless kitchen. There was no light in it except the dull glow of the fire, and in the window space a blue sky sprinkled with stars. She shuddered and as she leaned forward to lever up the coal in the grate there was a loud knock at the door that startled her. She rested the poker on the hob and waited. The knock came again. She hoisted herself from the chair, and as she walked down the hallway she heard the impatient shuffle of feet outside. She opened the door slowly and a few boys shouted breathlessly in at her: "Hurry up, Missus, we're going to light the bonfire now."

She hesitated for a moment in the hallway, and then pulling a shawl over her shoulders she made her way down to the middle of the street. The street lamps were in darkness and there was nothing but the tapping of feet, the mumble of unseen crowds, and a warm smell of paraffin. Boys, strangely dressed and their faces painted, were screaming like Indians and applying torches of paper to the heap of stuff they had collected. Then in a few minutes there came a hurl and burl of flame, a crackling of sticks and a cheer from the crowd that drowned the noises of the fire. The flames lit up the faces and hands of the crowd and tilted their shadows on the red-brick houses. Flames like flowing water sped over the old sofa, a bicycle tire was a ring of flame, leafy branches of trees hissed in the heat, and a rubber boot entangled among the twigs furred with flame and dripped drops of fire from its writhing toe.

The old woman moved out from the heat with its sickening smell of paraffin, and stood in the cooler shadows cast by the outer ring of swaying onlookers. No one noticed her. They began to sing *Hail, Queen of Heaven,* and when the singing came to an end a loud cheer volleyed above the houses, squibs banged in the fire, and a rocket gushed into the sky trailing behind it an arc of bright blue stars. The noise frightened the old woman and she hurried away from it. Near her home she looked back and saw the smoke lighted up by the fire and heard an accordion playing an Irish reel. She didn't stop to listen to it. She went into the house and halting in the hallway she clasped her hands and cried: "Mother of God, are you listening to me! Wherever Jimmy is this night tell him that I believe him—tell him that from me!"

Communications

Medical Insurance

Collins Center, N. Y.

TO THE Editors: I would like to answer certain points of Francis Downing's article appearing in the June 29th issue of THE COMMONWEAL, "A Shaky Case for the AMA." . . .

With the compulsory plan private medicine would probably cease to exist. I think you and we ought to preserve what little freedom is left. . . .

With regard to Mr. Downing's concern about the loosely hurled around terms of Communism, Socialism and Fascism in connection with the proposed bill, all these three forms of Government can not exist without control by the State over almost all branches of life; and we know that the more control the State will exercise, the more we will drift toward one of these forms of government. I remember too well the Nazi era through which I had to live. It started out with charity bells. *Everybody* should have the same of everything. Then after people did not do their part, the State "felt obliged" to straighten things out, because the humans were "too weak," and it all ended up with a colossal State machine swallowing up everything. . . .

Mr. Downing writes that our nation is in need of medical care. This, to me, appears ridiculous. As a physician who has seen conditions in other parts of the world, I know that all the care that a sick person is getting in this country can hardly be topped. . . .

I think we can save much and improve much by working on the moral line of things rather than with Government devices of distributing equally. . . .

ERNST A. VON DURING, M.D.

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Books

Heloise and Abelard. Etienne Gilson. Regnery. $3.

THERE is a chance that this work, which grew out of a series of lectures given at the Collége de France some years ago, may become Gilson's most widely read book in English-speaking countries. The story alone will interest a general reading public, for an interest in Abelard and Heloise is by no means confined to students of medieval culture. Yet, although Gilson's touch is light in this instance, there is no mistaking his scholarly spirit, which will frighten away a considerable number of readers, for this is a compact piece of scholarship which in some 160 pages offers a new interpretation of the famous love affair and a detailed documentary refutation of arguments raised against the authenticity of the Abelard-Heloise correspondence. M. Gilson proposes in his conclusion that the case be considered more carefully by those who would too cleanly separate the spirit of the Middle Ages from that of the Renaissance.

It is regrettable, yet understandable, that the aspect of the twelfth century *cause celèbre* most commonly remembered is the notorious sexual mutilation of Abelard. Linked to the knowledge of this mutilation are a number of vague ideas that Abelard was a priest, that he did not marry Heloise, that there was something very romantic about the whole incident. A quick glance at any encyclopedia would dismiss most of these pleasantly melodramatic points of view. Gilson, however, not only does what has been done before to show up all the misinterpretations, he also quite convincingly offers an analysis of the case which may become the accepted one for the future.

In this essay, Abelard's mutilation is regarded as having released him from the concupiscence that had caused him to abandon his ideal of Christian perfection, that of the celibate philosopher, for his secret marriage to Heloise was compounded of concupiscence, fear and jealousy. It was only after the mutilation, after he became a priest and urged Heloise to join him in his love of God, that, according to Gilson, Abelard achieved his greatest stature.

Heloise, however, showed no change in her life after her religious profession. What she was before she continued to be. If any inner change occurred, God was the only witness. Only her love for Abelard seemed to give meaning to her life. Against her own convictions she finally married him, after pointing out that for both of them such a marriage could only mean a fall from Grace. Once married, she again followed his wishes by obstinately denying the marriage, although it was this which goaded her relatives to mutilate Abelard. She had pleaded with him to keep her as his mistress, hoping that in this way he might some day have the strength to leave her and return to his ideal of Christian perfection, but as she consented to marriage, so did she later submit to him and consent to take religious vows. As an abbess she was respectful and obedient to the end. When Abelard commanded her in his letters to speak no more of certain things she obeyed, but even then the way in which she headed one letter was indicative of her feelings towards him: "To God in special, to Abelard in particular."

The story has a tragic depth. There is the very ideal of the celibate Christian philosopher which, as Gilson suggests, merits better study than it has received to date. Certainly the pursuit of this ideal made marriage assume a twisted and warped shape in Abelard's mind. There is the tragedy of Abelard who, insisting that it is the intention alone which determines the morality of an action, went on to make a comedy of the pursuit of sanctity. There is the case of Heloise's love, which she tried to safeguard and defended as pure and disinterested, but was not more than a great possessive love in which there was no acquiescence or sacrifice, but a voluptuous passivity.

Unfortunately Gilson's criticism of certain historical theories of the Renaissance is not as convincing as is his gift for psychological reconstruction. It is quite true that one can say that there is no such thing as the Renaissance because there is no essence of the Renaissance. To some readers of Manzoni, however, who will not overlook Gilson's sympathy with Nordstrom's Francomaniac interpretation of the Renaissance, such a statement would be reminiscent of Don Ferrante's conclusive arguments against the plague, of which he died, that it could not possibly exist since it could be proved that it was neither a substance nor an accident.

SERGE HUGHES.

The Oracle. Edwin O'Connor. Harpers. $2.75.

"THE premier bastard of this our noble land," who works in an industry that is "the imbeciles' New Jerusalem"—such, in the words of his radio network executive, is the oracle: Christopher Usher, radio news commentator of a certain, perhaps identifiable, sort. By the end of the book this opinion is pretty well shared by everyone who knows the oracle — everyone, that is, except Christopher himself, an obsolete general, and five million devoted radio listeners who praise God for Christopher Usher (and, presumably, the nasal salve he advertises) and who reside, most of them, in places like the rural districts of Arkansas.

Mr. O'Connor, who appears to know radio as an announcer, writer, and producer can know it, leaves no doubt about his opinion. Nor will the reader, who, as radio listener, may already have certain prejudices of his own, have any difficulty in sharing it. For Christopher is not admirable. He has—and his delicious father-in-law puts it this way—two attributes: "a remarkable talent for the commonplace, and that ridiculous lachrymal voice which appears to be standard equipment for describing to great numbers of idiots the catas-

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trophes they are currently enduring." His appeal, of course, is parochial and hearts-and-bowels rather than intellectual, and one can easily (this is the chief weakness of the book, perhaps inevitably imposed by its subject) predict the clichés with which he will fill his broadcasts and even his private life.

High among these clichés is, obviously, the American Way, and it is with the crises which come into Christopher's life when ironically he comes up against two of the concomitants of that way—the perils of free enterprise and the penalties of flouting, however privately, the sanctity of marriage — that *The Oracle* deals. The result is very pleasant and very biting comedy, though in the background is the tragic fact that the oracle *believes* what he says and, five million times worse, his listeners do too.

Mr. O'Connor, whose first novel this is, has made good use of his apprenticeship in radio writing and in the short story. He has a good sense of form and of the humorous and character-revealing detail. And, agreeable to note, he writes rather well. Alongside *The Hucksters,* its most obvious counterpart, *The Oracle* stands up very well, having most of its virtues and few of its flaws. At worst one can say that *The Oracle* suffers a little from contrivance and talkiness, but of such is the oracle's stock in trade.

ROBERT WICHERT.

The Sea Around Us. Rachel L. Carson. Oxford. $3.50.

THE remarkably warm greeting which reviewers all over the country gave to Miss Carson's book tends to turn attention from the book itself to the reading public: What is the psychological situation that prepares so quick a welcome for an avowedly elementary study of an admittedly obscure and loosely related field of natural history? Why this eagerness to plunge into the sea around us?

Answers about a "public" state of mind must be allowed a wide range. Eager and optimistic scientists can claim that a relatively new field of experimental investigation is being opened to mankind by modern techniques, and that educated readers are happily integrating the new knowledge of their environment into a realistic view of the world. A less optimistic judgment would associate this sudden popularity of oceanography with the "dope" scandals in New York and across the country: Here is a suave volume of blended fact and speculation, approached with a fashionably modern research romanticism, quite safely unrelated to the average reader's problems. And its immemorial sea parts provide a rather dreamy narcotic to minds and consciences overburdened with the earthy concerns of day to day.

Book habits are generally unphilosophical. But whatever serious dangers escape-literature may bring, one need not, in the particular instance, worry much about a brief escape to sea, particularly with a pilot who permits the passenger to apprehend without undue constraint the wonder and mystery of nature.

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The main thing this book is, is a compilation of thoroughly interesting facts and theories about oceans. There are fourteen chapters, divided into three parts, covering from the time the moon began, up to the most recently issued Sailing Directions. It is a work of radical simplification, organization and popularization. For each reader, it will be somewhat uneven, according to his own experience and knowledge. If a person has read a fair amount about exploration and discovery and charting and mapping, for example, Chapter 14, "The Encircling Sea," may seem condensed to the point of superficiality. Chapter 13 goes into "Wealth from the Salt Seas" not as productively as some publications and publicity about Dow Chemical. Thousands of graduates of Army Weather Observer courses, or equal civilian schooling, will not find Chapter 12, "The Global Thermostat," unusually helpful in explaining climate and weather. And so on, back to the first chapter — "The Gray Beginnings" — which Geology "majors" and theologians might find something less than a university text or the Book of Genesis.

The nature of the job demands a somewhat common denominator production, but it is an example of the best. While the information given has uneven novelty and interest for a single reader, the remarkably good organization of the whole material, and the even, clear prose style throughout, provide consistent, sustained pleasure. It has been widely remarked with amazement that such good prose and clear and lively presentation are the work of the Editor-in-Chief of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service—Miss Carson's current and unlikely title. The Editor, however bureaucratic her post, is a genuinely literary craftsman who knows reading and writing.

The unusual momentum of Miss Carson's writing is proved by the way it carries over, without being caught or hurried, numberless color passages which in a less disciplined book would stop the music.

> But we know now that the conception of the sea as a silent place is wholly false. . . . There is an extraordinary uproar produced by fishes, shrimps, porpoises and probably other forms not yet identified. . . .

She proceeds to tell about croakers ruining submarine detection off Chesapeake Bay early in the war, and about the deafening "shrimp crackle" heard "around the world, between latitudes 35° N and 35° S," and about "high-pitched resonant whistles and squeals, varied with the ticking and clucking sounds slightly reminiscent of a string orchestra tuning up, as well as mewing and occasional chirps," which white porpoises make in the St. Lawrence. And this kind of story does not throw the writer off pace, any more than her opening sounding of the depths of the Week of Creation in a hundred page geologists' counterpoint to the Bible.

Readers and writers should notice the greater challenge to her composition presented by the movement

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which had to be described in Part II: three chapters on "The Restless Sea." This tells how the sea acts, rather than what it is and what it contains. One of the special passages of the kind mentioned above that would block the progress of an ordinary book, shows how much more there is to the tide than the ready answer "twice daily movement of the waters in response to the moon's gravitational attraction." There are the sun, the moon and the other stars; and the tidal basins with water oscillating around their focusing nodes; and the "all-important" local topography.

In her modest acknowledgments, the author speaks of her "absorption in the mystery and meaning of the sea." That is an element it is hard to get directly from her clear book. This is a book about oceans, interesting and expert in its rendering of information about oceans. The mystery and meaning of the sea cannot be obtained by examination of the sea itself. However encompassing, "like the ever-flowing stream of time," the sea cannot bear its own explanation, and cast up its own meaning. Looking at it, contemplating it as Rachel Carson permits us to do, can raise in our minds and imaginations very fundamental questions whose study is no escape, but rather a closer approach to more profound reality, which relates the seas to other creation.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

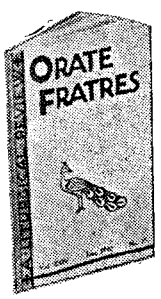
History of the Popes. Ludwig von Pastor. Vols. XXXVI-XXXVII. Herder. $5 each.

IT is sixty years since the first volume of the English translation of Pastor's great work appeared and twenty since the German edition was finished posthumously—and now at last the end is in sight. These latest volumes, which are mainly the work of Pastor's assistants, cover much of the reign of Benedict XIV and all that of Clement XIII. They bring the story down to 1769. There remain only the calamitous reigns of Clement XIV and Pius VI and the great history that begins with the fall of Boniface VIII will end with the death of Pius VI in prison, the victim, like Boniface VIII, of the French Government.

Many readers will find these volumes more depressing than any other part of the whole work. The eighteenth century saw a steady decline in the power and prestige of the Holy See, which was occupied by a succession of feeble rulers. Even Benedict XIV, with all his legal training, had no policy in dealing with secular rulers, however small their state, but to give in to every demand. Each concession led to further claims, until practically everything alienable was gone. The defense offered by those who seem to think that whatever has happened must be praised is that, given his circumstances, he had no alternative. They overlook his failure to make any attempt to alter the circumstances by making the necessary reforms in the inner life of the Church. During most of the

"The most pressing duty of Christians is to live the liturgical life, and increase and cherish its supernatural spirit."

—Pope Pius XII



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century Gallicanism, Jansenism, Regalism and Deism plagued the Church, and her reaction was largely ineffectual. No one remotely approaching Pius X appeared on the scene. No century in a millenium produced so few saints, and not even St. Alphonsus and St. John of the Cross could compensate for the spiritual tepidity of the age.

The main issue described in these volumes is the international conspiracy against the Jesuits that was to culminate in their suppression under Clement XIV. They are particularly valuable because of the detailed and richly documented account they give of the struggle, which here is given its proper place in the long-range plans of her enemies to destroy the Church. The fall of the Jesuits crippled the Catholic schools in Europe and many great mission fields, and gravely weakened the Church's capacity to resist the approaching storm of the Revolution. Readers of these volumes who are familiar with the intrepid resistance modern Popes have offered to much greater tyrants will feel that the destruction of the Old Regime was long overdue. They can only regret that the Church herself did not condemn on time the evils of a system from which she suffered so much. Those who doubt that the Church is better off today than in the generation before 1789 have only to read the sad and dreary story told so well in these excellent volumes. They can learn, among other things, that much greater injury was done by infiltration into key positions than by open opposition, which may throw light on some contemporary political problems. FLORENCE D. COHALAN.

Categorical Valuations of Jews Among Catholic Parochial School Children. Sister Mary Jeanine Gruesser. Catholic University.

THIS is a Ph.D. thesis of more than ordinary interest. Sister Jeanine worked with 737 children in nine parochial schools in the archdiocese of New York. Her findings should be of special value to all engaged in efforts to improve intercultural relationships.

• REVIEWERS •

SERGE HUGHES is a member of the Modern Languages department of St. John's University, Brooklyn.

ROBERT WICHERT is a member of the English department of the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts.

REV. FLORENCE D. COHALAN is a priest of the archdiocese of New York assigned to the faculty of Cathedral College.

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